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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AFGHANISTAN, U.S.-RUSSIA, EU-TURKEY, EU,
U.S., CHINA-RUSSIA;BERLIN

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- [¶1.](#) Lead Stories Summary

Print media focused on the coalition talks in which the CDU/CSU and the FDP agreed on correcting the Hartz IV social security laws, on the debate over the H1N1 flu vaccine, and on presenting the economic forecast for Germany's economy. Editorials focused on the Hartz IV laws and on the EU's progress report on Turkey. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened stories on a softening of the conditions for the Hartz IV laws.

- [¶2.](#) (Afghanistan) British Role

Most papers carried short reports saying that "Britain will increase its troops in Afghanistan" under certain conditions (FT Deutschland 10/15). The weekly Die Zeit (10/15) carried a photo of President Obama across the fold, and headlined: "Mr. Peace and his war. Obama's tragedy: He just received the Nobel Peace Prize, while he sacrifices his soldiers in battles that can hardly be won."

Under the headline "Worthless promise," Sddeutsche (10/15)

editorialized on PM Brown's idea to deploy more soldiers: "A great statesman makes unpopular decisions. Gordon Brown has just promised

to increase the number of British troops in Afghanistan. The announcement was made on the day a poll found that the number of Britons who support a withdrawal from Afghanistan is increasing.

So, is Brown a great statesman? The answer is no because Brown has made his not very generous offer dependent on a number of preconditions, so that one cannot really speak of an offer. He just passed the buck to NATO allies and his own officers; allies must also increase their troops, and the general staff must guarantee that the soldiers' armament is sufficient. This means that Britain will probably not send a single additional soldier to Afghanistan. The army has made clear that it does not even have enough money to sufficiently equip the troops already in the battle zone."

Nrnberger Nachrichten (10/15) commented: "Finally and far too late, we realize that not all Taliban are the same. The structures in Afghanistan are complex and are not just made up of religious fanatics. Regional warlords, who seek more influence, and drug barons, who don't want western soldiers in their way, usual criminals and al Qaida fighters are similarly dangerous."

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13. (U.S.-Russia) Secretary Clinton in Moscow

Tagesspiegel (10/15) analyzed "why the Americans and Russians are trying to restart their relations," noting that "resetting their relations as agreed upon by both Presidents has thus far been successful. works indeed Although Washington and Moscow are still worlds apart concerning Georgia and the status of the renegade provinces, their views on most issues of international politics, such as the Mideast, Iran, Afghanistan, North Korea, disarmament and non-proliferation are as close as they were during the short thaw period in the early 1990s.... Barack Obama is obviously taking Russian feelings into consideration, or has better advisors than his predecessor.... Some observers explain Washington's soft line by claiming that it is prepared to pay any price to get Moscow's support in the dispute over Iran's nuclear program. However, Moscow's influence on Tehran is smaller than the West thinks..., and Obama is too much of a realist to see Iran as a central challenge to his government, particularly because the U.S. needs Iran for its crisis management in Afghanistan. And over there, the U.S. needs Russia even more. In addition, the U.S. and Russia can only stand their ground together against a new supernova, which they find increasingly frightening: China. The giant empire is about to replace America as a leading economic power."

Frankfurter Rundschau (10/15) analyzed: "Time is getting short. START, in which Russia and the U.S. agreed 15 years ago to reduce their strategic nuclear weapons, is expiring in seven weeks. However, things are on the move. Hillary Clinton reported after her visit to Moscow that progress has been made in the talks with her Russian counterpart Lavrov. It remains to be seen whether this will suffice. The important negotiations will take place in Geneva. If they can

be
finalized in time, they still have to be ratified, which the U.S.
Senate will not accomplish this year, and the Russian Duma will not
attempt first. However, optimists believe that ratification can be
achieved; reducing strategic nuclear arsenals by another third.
Russia and the U.S. hold 90 percent of all nuclear weapons but
neither
side is ready to renounce them. Barack Obama's vision of a world
free
of nuclear weapons is a vision and not yet a goal of current
policies.
As long as other powers possess nuclear weapons, this will not
change."

Under the headline "The boss talks - she works," Frankfurter
Rundschau
(10/15) carried a lengthy report on Secretary Clinton's policy
making,
saying: "During her visit to Europe, Secretary Clinton is fighting
her
way out of the shadow of her former rival. Since Barack Obama has
his

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hands full at home, Clinton is becoming increasingly important for
the
White House. The Secretary, formerly pushed to the sidelines by
Obama, must now pull the chestnuts out of the fire."

Under the headline "Moscow's love for the bomb," Frankfurter
Allgemeine (10/15) reported on its front page that "Russia is
reducing
the threshold for nuclear strikes." Many papers carried similar
reports, though less prominently.

14. (EU-Turkey) Progress Report

All papers carried reports on the so-called "Progress Report" on the
accession of Turkey to the EU. Sueddeutsche (10/15) headlined:
"Turkey
is Still Far Away from EU Accession," and reported that "Brussels is

complaining about the ongoing violation of civil rights laws, but
praises Ankara's reconciliation with Armenia," while Berliner
Zeitung
(10/15) reported that there was 'only mild criticism from Brussels'

and that the European Commission is trying to keep Turkey on a
course
for implementing political reforms and is pressuring Turkey's
reconciliation with its neighbors." Tagesspiegel (10/15)
highlighted
that "Turkey has its own timetable" and that "the EU's progress
report
is hardly receiving any attention in Ankara." The daily added that
"Ankara is pursuing a course of political reforms almost without any
cooperation from Brussels."

Deutschlandfunk (10/14) broadcast the following commentary: "It is
not
necessary to look for progress in Turkey in the EU's Progress
Report.

It exists.... But it is more striking that nothing has moved with
respect to freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, and freedom of

religion. The same is true for women's and children's rights, the
independence of the courts, and the privileges of the Turkish
military. But these are the decisive sectors. The EU is more than
a
large free trade zone: it is exactly those values that keep the EU

together. Currently, a country such as Turkey has no place in the EU, but it would be of no use for anyone if the accession talks were cut. If the EU wants things in Turkey to change, then there is no better way than via accession talks and continued pressure on Ankara. But the EU must also answer one question: Why does it not insist that Turkey treat Cyprus in the same way it treats all the other 26 EU members? An EU that does not stick to its promises will lose credibility, and an EU that does not take its own threats seriously will turn into a paper tiger."

Frankfurter Rundschau and Berliner Zeitung (10/15) carried a syndicated editorial under the headline: "EU Must Offer Turkey another

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Alternative" and wrote: "Several things are turning out for the better in Turkey. But there are also many things for which the Ankara government must be criticized. In the country the rule of law does not dominate; the protection of minorities is still insufficient; freedom of opinion is restricted; and only recently Premier Erdogan took drastic steps against media houses. But the demand of German politicians to slam the door on the country is as serious as the promise of comprehensive tax cuts in the midst of the financial crisis. Those who want to be taken seriously, cannot call for radical steps and ignore the foreseeable consequences. To give up the talks would mean to immediately stop the reform process in Turkey. The EU would thus snub its strategic partner. If necessary, the EU must be prepared to write ten or twenty progress reports and thus rap Turkey's knuckles."

Under the headline: "Turkey's Long Path," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (10/15) argued: "In 15 years. Turkey will be a different country than it is today. As far as the economy is concerned, it will grow faster than all EU countries. And we believe that Turkey will make great steps toward achieving a genuine democracy. That Turkey is 'structurally unable to join the EU,' as a CDU European Parliament member said, is nonsense. But a favorable outcome of the EU-Turkey talks is not guaranteed. The old undemocratic elite in the armed forces, bureaucracy, and the judicial system are no longer able to shape things. But they still have the power to sabotage. Premier Erdogan and the Turkish democrats need all the support they can get. Europe should give this support."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (10/15) opined: "As flattering as the demand for an accession to the EU is, it will be far more dangerous if countries are accepted which do not have the necessary maturity. That is why the European Commission is well-advised to demand further progress, for instance, in the judicial system. It is no less important to eliminate one general deficiency: The enlargement of the EU is not only an effective method to stabilize surrounding countries,

but it is also basically the only method that has proved effective.

Why does the EU not consider 'functioning partial memberships?'

They

would offer tangible advantages and would give credibility to the European perspective. If not, those who are striving for a full membership, such as Turkey, could, in the end, witness disaster."

Regional daily Mittelbayerische Zeitung of Regensburg (10/15)

opined:

"If Turkey really wants to join the EU, it must now speed up. The top

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priority must be the resolution of the Cyprus conflict. A country that is trying to become an EU member cannot fail to recognize another

EU member, Cyprus. This is also the strongest argument of all those

who do not want to see Ankara in the EU. The EU will certainly continue to demand a lot from Turkey."

15. (EU) Future President

In an editorial under the headline: "Euro Blair," the weekly Die Zeit

(10/15) argued: "It almost seems that Europe could not expect to demonstrate to the world what kind of a petty-minded continent it is.

The Lisbon Treaty seems to become a reality now, when the EU is shying

away from filling the new position of European Council president with

a man who has the right stature for such a job: Tony Blair. But there

is no other name that is being mentioned with so much contempt at receptions in Brussels. There is no doubt that it is Blair's stigma

to have supported a war that was opened without the mandate of the international community and cost the lives of thousands of people.

But there is one truth about this war, which is obviously too simple

to be included in these considerations: It was not the soldiers of

the western coalition, but the radical Islamic terrorists, who killed

so many civilians. In reality, the Blair opponents are only interested in finding a Eurocrat who can represent the EU's interests.

Why has no one criticized European Commission President Barroso who

also supported the Iraq War? No, the new EU president should use binoculars not a magnifying glass. And he must be able to evoke change. Blair gave evidence he was capable of this not only in Northern Ireland but also when he reawakened a seriously ill Labor Party and created a 'we' feeling in Great Britain. And Blair already

discovered the new world order in 2001, which Barack Obama is only now

proclaiming. And a few weeks after 9/11, Blair said the world

"needs

a new dimension of international relations.' In view of these ambitions, Europe needs to turn away from a quarter century of debate

over treaties and turn toward new horizons."

16. (U.S.) Future Role in the World

Weekly Die Zeit (10/15) carried a lengthy report under the headline:

"The Helplessness of the Most Powerful," and wrote: "The global echo

of awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Barack Obama was not very enthusiastic. Nevertheless, there is a worldwide logical flaw in the

demand for Obama to 'deliver' first and in the doubts about his strength. Yesterdays standards are being applied to today; standards

that have decreased. It is not Obama's lack of resolve that is primarily responsible for his thus far modest successes. The fact that the world does not orient to U.S. wishes has little to do with

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the personal characteristics of the president but much to do with the historic loss of U.S. power (and the West in general). It is a historical process, and he is the expression of it and he must manage it. If we had had a global climate policy 50 years ago, Europeans and Americans would have stayed among themselves, but, today, nothing goes without China and India. During the peak of the Iraq War, the U.S. was indifferent to the things the rest of the world was thinking; in the end, the U.S. did what it wanted. But today, from Iran...to the Middle East...and to the global economic crisis, the United States is exhausting itself in garnering support from everyone. It is pure imagination to think that a U.S. president must only pound the table to reverse the shift of power. Do people really believe that a 'more resolute' President McCain or a President Clinton...would have been able to push electoral fraudster Ahmadinejad out of office or won the support of the IOC for Chicago as Olympic City? This rhetoric about 'leadership' is nothing but a brandishing with plastic swords. For U.S. commentators such as Rush Limbaugh, Charles Krauthammer and their friends, these issues are pushing aside the facts: Barack Obama, his ideas, and his social milieu are made to be responsible for the crisis to avoid facing the bitter historical reality of a loss of influence. However, it is surprising that many people in the rest of the world make such arguments their own. Disappointment at a 'weak' president, who does not 'deliver?' People quickly forget what hopes they had pinned on him. Not, as despisers of Obama like to claim, that he a Messiah who would resolve all evil on earth, but that he would restore a minimum degree of reason to the world, that the level of global crisis would go down and that the United States would adapt to the realities in the 21st century - to the reality that the United States is losing power."

Stern magazine remarked: "Obama is like an architect who is being awarded for his sketches, but has not built a single house yet. It is a bet on a better future. The Norwegians have voted for hope and change, just like Americans a year ago, not for his achievements. Obama's greatest success so far is a world that likes America again.

He has achieved a political climate of change. He is the American that Europeans like: self-critical, sensitive, tolerant and anti-Bush. He is capable of expressing the gestures so greatly needed after the times of 'old Europe' and the 'axis of evil.' He speaks words that reach the hearts of the people. Barack Obama has ended a foreign

political campaign. He wanted the people to have confidence in America again.... He could become the first global president. The

Norwegians have encouraged him. However, he has not yet achieved everything in foreign politics."

17. (China-Russia) Natural Resources Agreement

Frankfurter Allgemeine (10/15) editorialized: "When China and Russia sign contracts on natural resources, the West and particularly Western Europe prick their ears because they wonder whether the dependency on Russian gas can be balanced by Western suppliers. Although the Chinese regime, which depends on a rapid economic growth, is trying to secure its energy supplies around the globe, we should not ignore the difficulties if Russia changes its direction."

MURPHY